

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-04 IO-06

INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 /044 W

-----084048 071018Z /14

R 070855Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2860

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 2860

LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PSDC

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER'S REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S  
ASIA SOCIETY SPEECH

REFS: A) STATE 153580; B) SINGAPORE 2846

1. IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF YOUR MESSAGE TO PM LEE (REFTEL A) I PASSED IT ALONG TO HIM VIA HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY. I WAS ALREADY IN RECEIPT OF A PERSONAL NOTE FROM PM LEE TO ME THANKING ME FOR SENDING HIM A COPY OF THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH.

2. PM LEE'S FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH CAME AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE 10TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING JULY 5. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL B, HE TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY AND GAVE THE SPEECH AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN HIS ADDRESS. PROBABLY IN LIGHT OF HIS OWN DETERMINATION TO FORCE THE PACE OF ASEAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HE STRESSED THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH, AND NOTED FAVORABLY THE SECRETARY'S EXPRESSED HOPE THAT OUT OF THE IMPENDING US-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS A BAEJU WOULD EMERGE FOR STRONGER US SUPPORT OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL EFFORTS. I WAS PRESENT ON THIS  
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OCCASION, AND NOTED THE FAVORABLE RING HE CONVEYED WHEN HE SAID THE SPEECH WAS "DEVOID OF RHETORIC AND FREE FROM IDEOLOGICAL OVERTONES." TO HIM, THIS FEATURE ENHANCED ITS IMPACT.

3. YOU MAY HAVE NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM ALSO REFERRED TO THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH IN SOME DETAIL IN HIS JULY 6 ADDRESS TO THE ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING. LIKE PM LEE,

HE STRESSED THE NON-IDEOLOGICAL, REALISTIC ASPECTS OF THE SPEECH. THE INFERENCE HE DREW WAS THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO HELP THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH WANT TO HELP THEMSELVES, BUT WILL NOT DO THE JOB FOR THEM IN TERMS OF DEFENDING AGAINST INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL THREATS.

4. FROM THE TONE OF PM LEE'S SPEECH (AND ALSO THAT OF FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM), IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE US IS NOT VIEWED AS A POWER WHICH IS WITHDRAWING FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT RATHER AS A FORCE WHICH WILL REMAIN AND HELP OUT--PRIMARILY IN ECONOMIC MATTERS--WHERE HELP IS REQUESTED AND CAN EFFECTIVELY BE UTILIZED. THE SECRETARY'S DEFINITIVE SPEECH WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS JUDGMENT. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT PM LEE AND RAJARATNAM PLAYED DOWN THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH SINCE LIKE THEIR ASEAN COLLEAGUES THEY ARE SENSITIVE TO CHARGES BY HANOI THAT THE US IS ATTEMPTING TO TURN ASEAN INTO A REPLACEMENT FOR SEATO. HAVING READ THE SPEECH, HOWEVER, THEY ARE AWARE OF THE MILITARY ASPECTS MENTIONED BY THE SECRETARY. (RAJARATNAM CAREFULLY AVOIDED ATTRIBUTING ANY MUTUAL DEFENSE ROLE TO ASEAN. BY DISCUSSING ASEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHANGES IN GREAT POWER ATTITUDES OVER THE PAST DECADE AND THE NEED FOR SELF-RELIANCE AGAINST ANY COMMUNIST THREAT, HOWEVER, HE SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES MIGHT ONE DAY FIND ASEAN A USEFUL FRAMEWORK FOR MUTUAL DEFENSE EFFORTS.)

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5. APROPOS OF THE CONTINUED US MILITARY ROLE IN EAST ASIA AS OUTLINED BY THE SECRETARY, I ALSO RECEIVED A NOTE OF THANKS FROM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER GOH KENG SWEE FOR SENDING HIM THE SPEECH. ONLY LAST WEEK I TOOK DR. GOH AND OTHER SENIOR SINGAPOREANS TO THE USS CONSTELLATION TO WITNESS CARRIER OPERATIONS AND OBSERVE OPERATION MERLION IV, AND I BELIEVE DR. GOH HAS GOOD REASON TO APPRECIATE THE US MILITARY MUSCLE NOW DEPLOYED IN THE REGION.  
HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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